LOS RANCHOS

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OF THE

LAFAYETTE - ORINDA - MORAGA

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Vol. 1 No. 1, October, 1973 Box 103, Moraga, CA 94556

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"HISTORY OF THE AREA RESERVOIRS"

Mr. Cleve Cunningham
East Bay Municipal District
Public Information Officer

Monday October 15
8:00 P.M.

Lafayette School
Moraga Road and School Street

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LAFAYETTE

Editor: Angela Broadhead Address: P.O.Box 133, Lafayette 94549

In photographs taken in 1927, when the Lafayette Reservoir was started, large teams of horses as well as gasoline driven equipment were used to haul dirt and materials during construction of the 1.38 billion gallon reservoir. Then in 1928, when the dam was almost completed, large cracks appeared in the dam structure and the project was halted for five years as engineers and geologists conferred.

Mr. Cunningham's slide presentation will deal largely with two other nearby reservoirs, the Upper San Leandro and the San Pablo Dam Reservoir. The area that surrounds the Upper San Leandro is ecologically the most diverse where vegetation ranges from second growth redwood in the Canyon area to a stand of knobcone pine which UC believes is unique. The San Pablo Dam Reservoir with its 775 acres has long been one of the most visible of all the reservoirs since the Dam Road skirts its western edge. In 1973 public need for recreational access resulted in the opening of San Pablo Dam Reservoir to boating and fishing.

In the summer of 1973, the Lafayette Reservoir presents the ideal recreation scene with its fishing, sailboating, picnicing, and hiking. Small children feed the ducks while others jog or ride their ten-speed bikes along the paths of the water's edge.

But it was not always like this according to Mr. Cleve Cunningham who will speak to the three historical societies at the October 15 meeting beginning at 8:00 P.M. Mr. Cunningham, public information representative for the EBMUD will have as his topic, "History of the Area Reservoirs."

According to the Land Use Master Plan of the EBMUD, "The EBMUD's watershed lands and reservoirs in Alameda and Contra Costa counties offer an open space resource without equal in the San Francisco Bay Area." To hear more about this subject from a speaker who has published extensively in national magazines come to the October 15 meeting to be held in the auditorium of the Lafayette School, corner Moraga Road and School Street, Lafayette (opposite Town Hall). The meeting of the combined three societies is open to the public.

PARAMOUNT PREVIEW TOUR A GREAT SUCCESS

Walter Costa, president of Lafayette Historical Society, arranged a most enjoyable tour for members of the three societies. More than one hundred interested participants saw details of the restoration work which has transformed the former movie palace into an outstanding and beautiful Paramount Theater of the Performing Arts.

It was an event of historic importance, and will be remembered by all who experienced it, from the old-timers to the youngest children. From all of us, thanks very much!

GIFT STATIONERY FOR FUND RAISING PROJECT

With two successful editions of picture post cards to their credit, the Lafayette Historical Society has ventured into still another fund raising project. Distinctive note paper with four early Lafayette scenes will go on sale at the October 15 meeting.

Each set of twelve will have four different line drawings: The Way Side Inn, the Pioneer Store, the Old Lafayette School, and the Elam Brown Home. The Pioneer Store and the Way Side Inn, remodeled, still stand across from Plaza Park. Both of these buildings were made a State Point of Historical Interest in 1970. The Old Lafayette School, completed in 1893, is now part of the Methodist Church on Moraga Road. The Elam Brown drawing honors the founder of Lafayette whose home once stood on the south side of the creek near Hough Street.

Rich Lloyd, gifted young craftsman, contributed the excellent design and printing. Rich, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Lloyd, has had considerable experience in the printing field having learned the art form under his father, a master printer.

The artist who contributed his talents for these attractive line drawings is John Finger, DVC sophomore and son of Mr. and Mrs. George Finger. John has been the official historical society photographer for the past two years.

The fund raising project was co-ordinated by Mrs. Wayne Merryman and Mrs. John Helmick who hope you will buy several packages of note paper for holiday gift giving. The stationery is $2.00 for a package of twelve notes with matching envelopes.

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Editor: Carol Leland Address: P.O.Box 82, Orinda 94563

ORINDA STUDENTS LEARN LOCAL HISTORY IN "ORINDA WEEK"

By sponsoring an "Orinda Week" program of inter-departmental historical influences, the Orinda Historical Society will initiate the first promotion of developing "living" history in the Orinda community. A variety of historic approaches will be presented to all local fourth grade students throughout the week in all subject areas; such studies include art, music, science, mathematics, geography, language, and, of course, history.

Although the details are still being finalized, Alysone deLaveaga has been busy developing the specifics of the program. For example, language classes will be given a local touch by including discussion of translations of the Spanish street names. Mathematics will include problems relating to acreage left after lawyers' fees were paid with the proceeds of sales of land. By the end of the week, students will have a more personalized feeling for the different cultural origins of their community. They will be given a booklet of the week's activities for further home reference and for the interests of family members.

While the Orinda Historical Society efforts have been separated from the basic educational priorities in the past, we believe that programs similar to the "Orinda Week" are the most important steps taken to encourage community interest and support of historical affairs. By successfully presenting "living" history in this pilot program, society members hope to generate other innovative programs in the community.

"THE STORY OF VICTOR CASTRO AND THE EL SOBRANTE RANCHO"

Harriet Wahlander, third generation descendant of Victor Castro, will share with the combined three societies the results of her long research and the slides which illustrate the story. We invite you to join us on the evening of Tuesday, November 13 at 8:00 P.M. More complete information will be given in the next newsletter.

PICTURE FILE NEARS COMPLETION

The photographs of the society have been prepared for use by the community. Students at Miramonte High School have completed the mounting of the photos. We are grateful to Bob Callan, principal, and Bob Campbell, vice-principal, for this assistance. Bob Hobden, chairman, will attach an identifying story to each photo before circulating them. We have received a number of negatives of early Orinda from Mrs. Jill Hayward, for which we are most appreciative.

MORAGA

Editor: Brother Dennis P.O.Box 103, Moraga 94556

The Moraga Historical Society will hold its 8th Annual Banquet on October 13, 1973 at 7:00 P.M. The banquet will again be held at St. Mary's College in Dryden and Oliver Halls. The public is cordially invited to join the Society in its social hour, followed by dinner and entertainment at a cost of $6.75 per person. Those wishing to attend will kindly contact Marie Wilson at 376-6357 for reservations.

This year the Society will commemorate the Moraga Adobe with a re-enactment of a "Fandango at the Adobe". In the mid-1800's when the adobe was a large estate employing many laborers for the fields, livestock, animals, and domestic duties, celebrations were often held. The evening would begin with conversation and music, followed by supper. Dancing was kept up constantly throughout the evening, and a dance called the fandango was performed, often by one of Joaquin Moraga's daughters.

Although "The Adobe" will be featured in the historical displays during the cocktail hour, the map treasures recently donated to the society will be selectively shown. There will be history, too, told and read by the present resident of the Adobe, and, incidentally, the first president of the Society--Don Manuel.

Hors d' œuvres created from recipes drawn from three cookbooks detailing California ranchero and mission period cuisine will be served during the cocktail hour. Desserts and the meal itself will be prepared according to customs derived from the same sources. Table decorations will bear out the theme: A Fandango in Moraga Valley, 1855. Only the wine, which Jose poured, will be from a different cultural background and era.

This year Dancer Maruja Vargas and Guitarist Robin Brown of the Del Oro Conservatory of Lafayette will provide the entertainment for the evening. Guests are invited to come in Mid-Nineteenth Century costume. We hope you will join us.

MERIENDA AT MORAGA ADOBE

An estimated 130 persons toured the Moraga Adobe as guests of Don Manuel and the joined historical societies on Saturday, Sept.8. Lunch was held on the lawns surrounding the historic edifice, and tours, beginning at 1:00 P.M.,were led by the host and his wife Jean, as well as Mrs. Alice Greenwaldt, Al deGrassi, and Ralph Hall of the Orinda Historical Society. After the house tours, a hike to the Adobe's copious water supply(once providing that commodity for the communities of Moraga and Valle Vista as well) was led by Don Manuel.

Among those introduced to the members of the three societies were descendants of the grantees of the adjoining El Sobrante and Rancho de los Palos Colorados ranchos. From north of the crossroads came Victor Brennan, third generation descendant of Victor Castro, one of whose sisters was the wife of Joaquin Moraga, grantee to the south.

That grantee's descendants present were of the sixth and seventh generations of Moragas in California following the founding of San Francisco by Joseph Joachin Moraga in 1776. They were Eugene Winslow Moraga, Jr., and his son Clayton. With his brother Brett Joaquin, Clayton Thomas Moraga shares the distinction of being the only descendants in their generation who bear the name. Mr. Moraga travelled from Paso Robles in order to be present with his son at the festive occasion.

MAP TREASURES ARE DONATED

The Society has received two extraordinary documentary donations, both of them cartographical in content. The donors were both involved in the institutions that developed the Moraga Rancho: the Moraga Co. and the civil engineering firm of Wilson & Co.

The first, from Senator Arthur Breed, represents all the stages of the development of the Rancho from its first broad purchases from Charles A. Hooper Co. to the subdivisions of minor parcels of land; the second, from Frank Draeger, represents the major ventures of the same company, most of the maps being the silk-based paper originals from which all subsequent copies were made.

Subsequent issues of LOS RANCHOS will list prominent or significant developments out of the hundreds shown by the maps of these two collections. Since they represent the early development of the Moraga Rancho, most of them depict subdivisions of the Lafayette (e.g.,Lafayette Homesites north of the freeway) and Orinda (Bryant to Glorietta townsites) areas. In the meantime a native Moragan is spending four hours a day indexing the two collections, and it is hoped he will have many of the maps mounted for display during the Anniversary Banquet cocktail hour.

THE SOCIETY IS GRATEFUL TO:
Mr. Allan Palmer of Copley Books, Inc., publishers of Anza Conquers the Desert, for twelve proof sheets of nine-color reproductions of paintings (12 by 18 inch) depicting three of the scenes from the Colonizing Expedition of 1775-76 in which Joseph Joachin Moraga was second-in-command. The last shows Moraga enacting the ceremonial of the founding of the Presidio.

TRACING EARLY MORAGA FAMILY HISTORY

More is being learned about the Moraga family in Mexico. Thanks to the kind offices of the Honorable Daniel T. Hickey, Consul General of the United States in Hermosillo, Mexico, a valuable contact has been made with a gentleman in that capital city of the State of Sonora.

The Moragas have been traced as far back as the late 1600's and early 1700's in the vicinity of the presidio town of Altar where Joaquin Moraga's parents lived.

The gentleman responsible for the additional information is a physician at a hospital in Hermossillio. He is Dr. Gaston Cano Avila. Dr. Cano persuaded one of the city's newspapers, Informacian, not only to announce our quest for information about the Moragas on its front page with a minor headline, but to write a three-column article on the lead corner of page two. A report of his findings will be given in a less crowded issue of LOS RANCHOS.

Dr. Cano is, by the way, the president of a local chapter of the American-originated historical society known as "The Westerners."

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF MORAGA WAY

The GOLDEN JUBILEE OF MORAGA WAY will be coming up on October 15 when a half-century will have elapsed since the first opening was celebrated with great fanfare (barbecue, bands, speeches, ribbon-cutting) for the public on a Sunday of that date in the year 1923. It is hoped there will be a re-creation of that event in 1973.

MORAGA MEMBERS ACTIVE IN BART OPENING

Congratulations are due member Warren Miller for "making" history by way of having his color transparency reproduced on the cover of the national publication, Traction & Models. It captured the first BART train about to enter the Orinda Tunnel. The photographer presented the Society's Archives with a copy of this June, 1973 issue. At the ceremony accompanying the Opening Day ceremony at the Orinda Station, other members participated: Elinor Dickenson who told the history of the carrying of the mails to the area, and Brother Dennis who gave the invocation.

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